

The Perfect Needle-Holder.

BY CHARLES P. NOBLE, M.D.,
PHILADELPHIA.

EVERY active surgeon has large opportunities for employing a needle-holder. Every gynæcologist who does plastic work upon the genito-urinary organs, and who practises abdominal surgery after the modern technique, is obliged to employ a needle-holder. It is because the needle-holder is so valuable an instrument that many surgeons have endeavored to improve upon the patterns in use. The result is a multiplicity of patterns, many of which are crude and useless.

I desire to present an old needle-holder so improved by various surgeons and instrument-makers that I think it may fairly be called the perfect needle-holder. As I am not the inventor of the instrument, I feel the more free to insist upon its merits. The pattern upon which the instrument is based is known to "the trade"

as the Reiner needle-holder. One evolving the present pattern, advantage has been taken of all the improvements made by others, a new feature has been added, and the dimensions have been somewhat altered to accord with my theories as to what a needle-holder should be.

The following are the measurements of the instrument: Point to pivot of joint, $\frac{7}{8}$ in.; from pivot to joint of lock, $3\frac{3}{8}$ in.; from lock to end of handle, $3\frac{11}{16}$ in.; total length of needle-holder, $7\frac{15}{16}$ in.; width of handle at widest part, 2 in.; weight, $3\frac{1}{4}$ oz.

A perfect needle-holder should have the widest range of usefulness. It should combine in one instrument the advantages possessed by various others. It should be capable of grasping both large and small needles, and both straight and curved needles. It should not only be available for sutur-



ing on the surface of the body, where room is abundant and suturing simple, but also in the recesses of the body, as in the upper part of the vagina and in the depths of the pelvis, where suturing is difficult and room is at a premium. The needle-holder under consideration presents all of these advantages. Some of its points of excellence are worthy of comment:

(1) The *beak* of the instrument is narrow and tapers towards a point.

blades of the holder being separated by a spring. Thus the locking apparatus is simple and almost automatic.

(5) The *handle* is of such a form as to fit the hollow of the hand. This permits the free use of the thumb in managing the catch, and is of special service when curved needles are employed, because these are best passed by a movement of supination of the forearm, wrist, and hand.

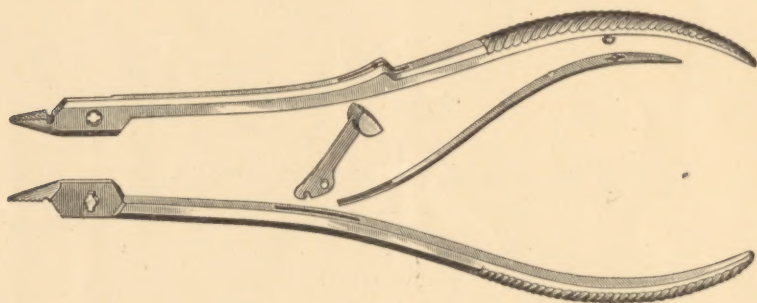


FIG. 1.

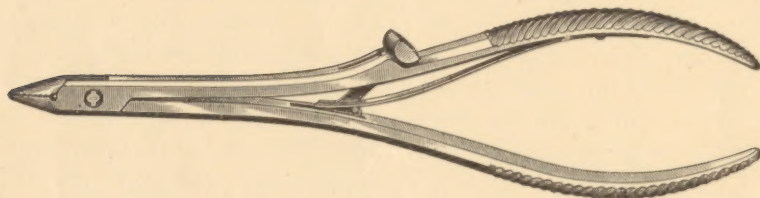


FIG. 2.

Thus curved needles can be grasped without breaking them.

(2) The *joint* is of the French pattern. All the parts of the instrument can be taken apart easily to be cleaned.

(3) The *shank* is light enough to be elastic, but heavy enough to be strong. This feature permits the grasping of large or small needles equally well.

(4) The *lock* or *catch* is self-locking when the needle is grasped. The holder is unlocked by simple pressure of the thumb against the catch, the

The handle of the instrument presented is intended for a hand of medium size. An operator with a very small hand could work better with a needle-holder having a slightly narrower handle ($1\frac{3}{4}$ in.), and the reverse is true of an operator with a very large hand, especially should the joints of the thumb not be supple. This last matter is one of great importance, as, should the handle be too narrow or too short for the hand that uses it, the unlocking of the catch becomes extremely awkward.

